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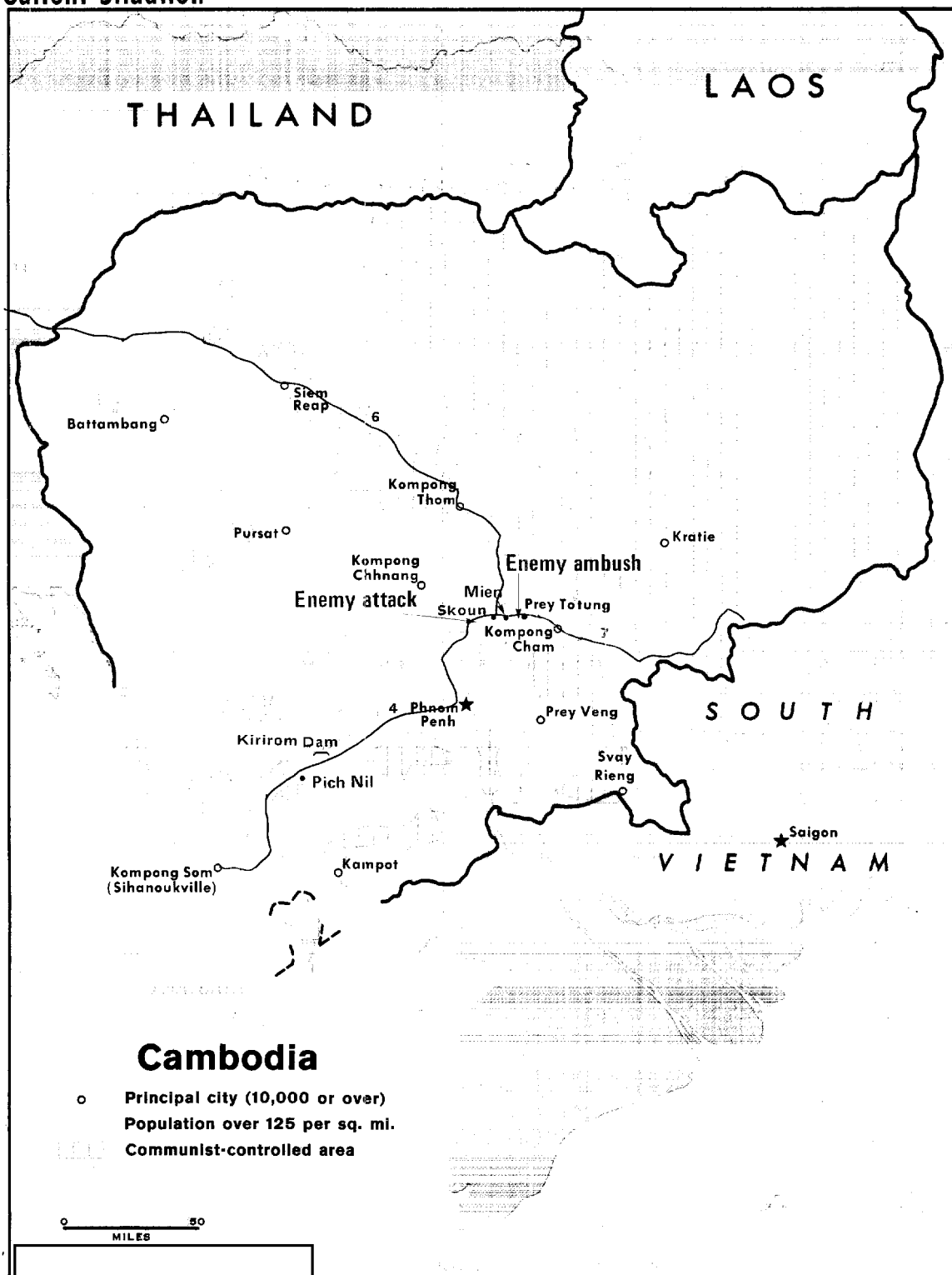
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Current Situation



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CAMBODIA: Government clearing operations along several key roadways are making no real progress.

In Kompong Cham Province, ten Cambodian Army battalions ordered to launch a drive on 21 November to reopen Route 7 between Mien and Kompong Cham city apparently have not yet moved out in force. An enemy prisoner, who claims to be from the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment, said that that unit's mission is to control that same section of Route 7 and prevent government troops from reaching Kompong Cham city. In the meantime, however, the government's riverine resupply operation arrived at the city on 25 November without further incident.

A Cambodian paratroop battalion was badly mauled in an enemy ambush on 22 November on Route 7, just west of Prey Totung. Although Phnom Penh is trying to hush up this setback, the US defense attaché learned yesterday that only 80 of the battalion's 280 men have straggled back to friendly lines, and that all of the unit's equipment--including ten trucks--is unaccounted for. A US observation plane was downed by Communist fire when it later flew over the scene of the ambush.

Additionally, an enemy attack on another government convoy on Route 6 just below Skoun on 25 November resulted in three Cambodians killed and 23 wounded. Government reinforcements are being sent to help reopen the road.

Elsewhere, in the southwest, the six government battalions assigned to regain control of the Pich Nil Pass overlooking Route 4 have not advanced, and have reported sporadic contact with Communist forces. Moreover, late press reports indicate that enemy elements routed two government battalions near the Kirirom Dam yesterday.

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THAILAND: The cabinet changes announced this week strengthen the hand of Deputy Prime Minister Praphat's supporters in the government.

In reshuffling his cabinet, Prime Minister Thanom retained all previous members, but made one important ministerial transfer and added a new face. General Krit Siwara, a figure of growing importance who has recently moved toward a closer political alignment with Praphat, shifted from the Education Ministry to a specially created post in the Ministry of Defense. Senator Prasit, the head of the Liberal Party and one of Praphat's closest supporters, was given the deputy slot at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The timing of Prasit's appointment appears to be related to the considerable support he is expected to be able to muster on the government's behalf in Parliament when the controversial budget bill is voted on next month.

The cabinet changes will strengthen the impression that momentum is building for Praphat's early replacement of Prime Minister Thanom. [REDACTED]

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JAPAN: The spectacular suicide of Yukio Mishima will give Japan's small right wing its first postwar martyr.

Mishima, a highly popular novelist and prominent right-wing leader, committed hara-kiri Wednesday at the Tokyo headquarters of Japan's eastern army to protest constitutional limitations on the military. Just prior to his suicide, Mishima decried the Self-Defense Forces' lack of "true Japanese spirit," and called on them to destroy the present system. His speech met with considerable jeering from many of the listening troops.

Coming amidst rising fears in Asia of resurgent Japanese militarism, Tokyo is likely to make every effort to play down the significance of Mishima's dramatic act. Prime Minister Sato immediately condemned the suicide as the act of a "deranged mind," and this view apparently was supported by the media.

The government plans to exercise greater vigilance against various small but unpredictable far right groups, who may be encouraged to violent action by Mishima's suicide. The far right in Japan has a limited political impact, and its principal threat for the foreseeable future is likely to remain in the realm of isolated acts of terror or self-destruction.

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USSR: A city official in the capital of the Kazakh Republic recently claimed that air pollution is one of his major problems.

Alma-Ata has already adopted several measures to fight pollution, including a resolution to ban the establishment of additional heavy industry within the city. Also, the program to convert all heating plants from coal to natural gas is nearing completion. Finally, the public transportation system has switched entirely to electric-powered buses.

Looking to the future, the city has asked national authorities to speed research on devices to control automobile exhaust. The Soviet official claimed that experimental devices are already being tested in Moscow and Leningrad. Local experiments are under way to devise traffic control patterns that minimize stops and starts. The city is also trying to improve its public transportation system in order to reduce the incentive to purchase automobiles. Although Alma-Ata is located in an earthquake zone, city planners are even considering the possibility of building a subway system. [REDACTED]

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CYPRUS: President Makarios is beginning to take a tougher line on the intercommunal dispute.

Makarios previously maintained that the negotiations between spokesmen for the two communities should not be acknowledged to have failed. He now, however, seems prepared to write them off rather than to submit to any "outside" pressure in coming to an understanding with the Turkish Cypriots. The talks, which began in the summer of 1968, have made almost no progress and now seem near a deadlock.

Makarios may believe that his hand has been strengthened by recent contacts with several world leaders and that both the Greek and the Turkish governments are too preoccupied with internal problems to threaten his plans at this time. His renewed assertiveness may well evoke a similar response from the Turkish Cypriot side, again heightening the danger of intercommunal incidents. [REDACTED]

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CHILE-CUBA: President Allende has appointed a Cuban sympathizer as interim head of the national television network.

Columnist Augusto Olivares, nominated to the influential position, is well known for his pro-Castro sentiments. Permanent appointment requires confirmation by the Senate, however, and the Christian Democratic Party reportedly has decided to oppose Olivares. If it does so and the conservative National Party takes the same line, the appointment could be blocked. If Olivares is confirmed, he could make the national network, which covers nearly all of Chile, an effective instrument of partisan political indoctrination.

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In a move toward broadening Chile's ties with Cuba, the Central Bank on 21 November lifted all restrictions on commercial trade between the two countries. Allende's appointments to influential economic positions contain a number of people with experience in the Cuban Government.

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BOLIVIA: The government appears ready to release two of the best known foreign participants in Che Guevara's unsuccessful guerrilla campaign.

25X1 President Torres' private secretary has told a US Embassy officer that the President is "actively seeking" a way to arrange the departure from Bolivia of Jules Regis Debray, the prominent Marxist guerrilla theoretician who is serving a 30-year sentence for his involvement with Guevara. Bolivian press media are also predicting the imminent release of Ciro Roberto Bustos, an Argentine member of Guevara's group. Government [] have not denied rumors of the impending releases. The cabinet was to meet on 25 November to draft a general political amnesty which would include both men.

An amnesty that included Debray would improve the President's standing with leftist and extremist groups which have been demanding such action since Torres seized power in early October. Debray's release, however, would increase military dissatisfaction with the government. []

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Party boss Husak is increasing his efforts to make peace with the intellectual community.

With the purge of the more outspoken liberals now complete, the regime has embarked on a program to reorganize the country's cultural activity. The Czechoslovak minister of culture has announced that any artist who did not flee abroad or betray his country through his work will be given an opportunity to create again, even if in 1968 he issued or signed proclamations like the famous declaration of freedom entitled "2,000 words." The minister also said that cultural unions, which sponsor all artistic and literary activity, will be reinstated, possibly by the end of the year, and that new publishing guidelines favoring literary creativity will be drawn up. He also stated that a nationwide conference of the unions would be held to redefine goals.

The regime may be willing to grant the creative intelligentsia considerable leeway short of political criticism of government policies. Husak has personally led the campaign to induce artists and writers to "return to the fold." He has removed hardliners from key positions in the media and government and may have personally vetoed efforts this fall to hold trials for the liberal "Pachman" group.

Husak has acknowledged the crucial role of the intelligentsia in his policy of "reconciliation." Without their support his efforts to gain public acceptance of his domestic policies will be difficult. Nevertheless, the political facts of life dictate that he tread cautiously in his initiatives toward the intellectuals. Many of them oppose his policies, making an early rapprochement unlikely.

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TUNISIA: President Bourguiba apparently has ordered the government to take a hard line on the student strike, and three schools of the university have been closed indefinitely. A movement is under way among students at a fourth school to boycott classes in a show of solidarity. Tunisia's two student organizations--the General Union of Tunisian Students and the Destourian Students, both subordinate to the ruling Destourian Socialist Party--have failed to demonstrate any leadership in this crisis, either to direct the boycott which began last Thursday or to persuade the students to resume their studies. The situation may be allowed to simmer until after the end of Ramadan holiday around 30 November. [REDACTED]

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TURKEY: Prime Minister Demirel's political position is becoming increasingly less stable, and Parliament itself appears to be in serious trouble. Marked by growing dissension, the 450-member National Assembly remains deadlocked in its month-long effort to choose a Speaker--a necessary first order of business. Furthermore, public criticism of the prolonged stalemate is growing. The long period of political frustration and instability, which in essence began last spring with the breakdown of discipline within the majority Justice Party, raises again the possibility of direct military intervention [REDACTED]

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PAKISTAN: The US Consulate-General in Dacca, East Pakistan, believes that the Pakistanis are placing too much emphasis on medical assistance to survivors of the cyclone-tidal wave. There are virtually no injured, and cholera and other diseases are not on the increase. The consulate feels that food distribution is the most urgent problem, and that enough helicopters and boats are already scheduled to be deployed to meet this problem. The most serious impediment to relief operations is the disorganization in the affected areas resulting from the shattering of the local administrative apparatus during the disaster. [REDACTED]

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ITALY: Prime Minister Colombo's government has set the stage for a showdown with the opposition on the key economic bill. Government party leaders have begun continuous sessions in the Chamber of Deputies and are threatening a vote of confidence at the beginning of next week if approval is not reached earlier. The Communist Party believes that a vote of confidence would harm its interests by blocking whatever amendments it might otherwise be able to negotiate with the government majority. Under the last two governments the Communists have had greater success in getting serious consideration for their amendments to legislation. Therefore, they may seek to force the small Soviet-financed Proletarian Socialist Party to call off its obstructionist tactics. [REDACTED]

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HAITI: President Duvalier has apparently chosen his son Jean-Claude to succeed him and has taken steps to overcome legal obstacles to his succession. Jean-Claude recently made a number of well-publicized public appearances usually reserved for the President. A newspaper article on one such event said that the President had chosen his son "for the continuity of his (Duvalier's) work of redress." Initial reaction to reports of Jean-Claude's possible succession have been mixed, and armed forces support is doubtful. Some consider widespread bloodshed and chaos a likely consequence if the attempt is made to impose Jean-Claude after Duvalier's death.



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